

DEFINITIONS OF VARIABLES IN OECD HEALTH DATASET

Expenditure on health Total expenditure on health is defined as the sum of expenditure on activities that—through application of medical, paramedical, and nursing knowledge and technology—has the goals of:

- Promoting health and preventing disease;
- Curing illness and reducing premature mortality;
- Caring for persons affected by chronic illness who require nursing care;
- Caring for persons with health-related impairments, disability, and handicaps who require nursing care,
- Assisting patients to die with dignity,
- Providing and administering public health,
- Providing and administering health programmes, health insurance and other funding arrangements.

With this boundary, general public safety measures such as technical standards monitoring and road safety are not considered as part of expenditure on health.

Activities such as food and hygiene control and health research and development are considered health-related, but are not included in total health expenditure. Expenditures on those items are reported separately in the chapter on health-related functions.

Health can be divided into the following functional components of health care (HC) and health care-related (HC.R) items according to the International Classification for Health Accounts (ICHA) which is presented in the OECD manual “A System of Health Accounts” (SHA): www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-684-5-no-27-24508-0,00.html

HC.1 Services of curative care

HC.2 Services of rehabilitative care

HC.3 Services of long-term nursing care

HC.4 Ancillary services to health care

HC.5 Medical goods dispensed to out-patients

HC.1–HC.5 Total expenditure on personal health

HC.6 Services of prevention and public health

HC.7 Health administration and health insurance

HC.6 + HC.7 Total expenditure on collective health

HC.1–HC.7 Total current expenditure

HC.R.1 Investment (gross capital formation) in health

HC.1–HC.7 + HC.R.1 TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH

Further health care-related items:¹

HC.R.2 Education and training of health personnel

¹HC.R.2–HC.R.7 are not included in the OECD/SHA definition of Total expenditure on health.

HC.R.3 Research and development in health
HC.R.4 Food, hygiene and drinking water control
HC.R.5 Environmental health
HC.R.6 Administration and provision of social services in kind to assist living with disease and impairment
HC.R.7 Administration and provision of health-related cash-benefits

Gross domestic product Gross domestic product is an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs). The sum of the final uses of goods and services (all uses except intermediate consumption) measured in purchasers' prices, less the value of imports of goods and services, or the sum of primary incomes distributed by resident producer units.

Sources & Methods: OECD National Accounts, Paris (published annually). Extracted 22 April 2004.

Life expectancy at birth Life expectancy at birth (also given for ages 40, 60, 65 and 80) is the average number of years that a person at that age can be expected to live, assuming that age-specific mortality levels remain constant.

Sources & Methods: For the 22 European countries, the Eurostat NewCronos database is the main data source for 1985 onwards. Note: Life expectancy at birth for the total population is estimated by the OECD Secretariat for all countries, using the unweighted average of life expectancy of men and women. Australia Australian Bureau of Statistics. Deaths Australia. Cat. No. 3302.0. Canberra: ABS.

Infant mortality The number of deaths of children aged under one year of age that occurred in a given year, expressed per 1000 live births.

Sources and Methods: For the 22 European countries, the main data source is the Eurostat New-Cronos database.

Compensated absence from work due to illness The number of compensated work days lost per year due to illness per employed person.

Sources & Methods: Administrative sources responsible for compensating absence from work due to illness (e.g., social security, public or private insurance agencies). Please note that differences in the coverage of the working population and in reporting systems limits the comparability of data across countries.

Practising physicians The number of physicians, general practitioners and specialists (including self-employed) who are actively practicing medicine in public and private institutions. The data should exclude dentists, stomatologists, qualified physicians who are working abroad, working in administration, research and industry positions. Data should include foreign physicians licensed to practice and actively practicing medicine in the country.

Practising nurses Total number of nurses certified/registered and actively practicing in public and private hospitals, clinics and other health facilities, including self-employed. Nursing assistants

and midwives should be included. Data should exclude nurses who are working abroad, working in administrative, research and industry positions.

Computed tomography scanners Number of computed tomography (CT) scanners, also known as ‘CAT’ scans for Computed Axial Tomography. CT scanners image anatomical information from a cross sectional plane of the body. Each image is generated by a computer synthesis of x-ray transmission data obtained in many different directions in a given plane.

Sources & Methods: The definition is based on Stedman’s Concise Medical Dictionary for the Health Professions, 1997.

Number of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units Note that MRI refer to a diagnostic modality in which the magnetic nuclei (especially protons) of a patient are aligned in a strong, uniform magnetic field, absorb energy from tuned radio frequency pulses, and emit radio frequency signals as their excitation decays. These signals, which vary in intensity according to nuclear abundance and molecular chemical environment, are converted into sets of tomographic images by using field gradients in the magnetic field, which permit 3-D localization of the point sources of the signals. Unlike conventional radiography or CT, MRI does not expose patients to ionizing radiation.

Sources & Methods: The definition is based on Stedman’s Concise Medical Dictionary for the Health Professions, 1997.

Mammographs Number of dedicated mammography machines (those designed exclusively for taking mammograms).

Health care coverage Share of population eligible for health care benefits (in-kind) under public programmes.

This series gives the share of the population which is eligible to health care goods and services that are included in total public health expenditure. Coverage in the sense of this index is therefore independent of the scope of cost-sharing.

For the USA these estimates are the results of a household survey that collects information on health care coverage. The definition of this series is persons covered by Medicaid, Medicare and military health care for active military and their families, including care for retired military and veterans.

Total sulphur oxide emissions Man-made emissions of sulphur oxides (SO_x) expressed in tonnes (000) and kilograms per capita.

Sulphur oxides (SO_x) exert pressure on human health; they also contribute to acid deposition and thus have negative effects on aquatic ecosystems and buildings and may have negative effects on crops and forests. Data are given as quantities of SO₂.

Alcohol consumption Alcohol consumption in liters per capita (age 15+): Annual consumption of pure alcohol in liters, per person, aged 15 years and over.